

As a consumer of digital content, I have a grave concern about the proposed Broadcast Flag. I enjoy the flexibility and control that technology gives me.

Technology currently gives me more choices by allowing me to record a television program and watch it later; I currently have 3 TIVO's and it has completely changed the way I watch TV. This is a huge market opportunity for the movie industry as well, if they don't kill the market before it even gets off the ground.

Imagine a few years from now. Everyone has a PVR with 500G of storage. Satellite or Cable now reserve, say, 20 channels to continual movie (encrypted) download to your PVR. After a week of operation, you have instant access to several hundred movies at the click of your remote. The movie is played, the smart card records your selection and downloads that information to the provider for billing. Just like the VCR, the movie industry now has a new, cost effective way to get movies to consumers in a way they will absolutely love - did I mention no more late fees or running back and forth to the video store? Consumers will love this, and the industry will have an extremely cheap venue to get their content to the consumer. The technology is here now. We just need to let PVRs take hold, let the costs come down over time, and all of this will take place.

Of course, if the FCC had listened to the "sky is falling" message that these same people expressed over the VCR some years ago, the movie industry wouldn't enjoy a major source of profits for their business today through VHS and DVD distribution.

Please, protect these businesses from themselves. Everyone resists change, including the movie industry, but if this technology is allowed to blossom, there will be profits for everyone.

I am a law-abiding consumer who believes that piracy should be prevented and prosecuted. However, if theoretical prevention comes at the cost of prohibiting me from making legal, personal use of my content, then the FCC should be working to protect all consumers rather than enable those who would restrict consumer rights. In the case of the broadcast flag, it seems that it will have little effect on piracy. With file-sharing networks, a TV program has only to be cracked once, and it will propagate rapidly across the Internet. So, while I may be required to purchase consumer electronic devices that cost more and allow me to do less, piracy will not be diminished.

In closing, I urge you to require the content industry to demonstrate that its proposed technologies will allow for all legal uses and will actually achieve the stated goal of preventing piracy. If they cannot, I urge you not to mandate the broadcast flag.